

564 The Tuareg, who heartily scorn them because of their obscure origin and servile profession, recognize their good qualities and are happy to profit from them. They also fear them a good deal, for [754] they credit them with supernatural powers of sorcery and magic. Possessors of fire, mistreating the earth and the minerals by beating them, they are placed in a world apart, inhabited by the genii with whom they are likely to enter into relations. Although the Moslem marabouts willingly sell amulets, which the Tuareg prize, the latter [751] do not hesitate, in case of need, to ask the Enaden for amulets in preference.

The Enaden are still more despised because they have no moral principles and willingly serve as spies and traitors; they spy on the [837] Ikkan and the wives of their masters and also act as go-between for lovers. Like the jesters in our Middle Ages, they have the right to go anywhere, including among the women. Everyone finds this natural, for this is a right which is all but acknowledged.

• [726] Sometimes they take part in raids, and they are reputed to fight bravely, although no one wants to stay beside them during combat, since they seem to possess talismans so powerful that javelins directed toward them deviate /175/ from their route and are apt to strike those [626] nearby. The Tuareg never kill an Enad, for this brings misfortune and the Enad might take revenge from beyond the tomb.

In Sudanese tribes they are called ag'gou (plural, ag'gouten) and 184 sometimes play the part of jesters (griot). Some are musicians and 564 storytellers. This role is not widespread, but it happens that the aménokal of the Tenguéréguif, Chéboun, has several griots attached to his person. They avenge themselves on people who are not [626] generous enough to them by making satirical songs against them to which the Tuareg are often very sensitive.

564 They are willing to do anything to earn a bit of money, which 426 they spend as fast as they get it. A blacksmith always has his debts, 454 but people give him credit for they know that he will be shrewd enough to repay them one day.

727 of captures, however, he had to give half of the captured animals
714 to the lender. In case of failure and death of the camel, he did
426 not have to reimburse him.

721 The men met, discussed the planned expedition, and uttered
726 a ritual formula (narha! allar) which bound them together for the
duration of the expedition, during which time they were to give
mutual assistance to one another.

Then they named a chief who was not necessarily an Amajer
/sing. of Imochar - Ed. / but a man renowned for his courage, his
/322/ suitability, and his experience on expeditions of this kind.
Then the group left, preceded by scouts.

726 All baggage was left behind. Everyone mounted on camel back,
taking only the bare necessities for the road, for it was necessary
to go quite fast and try to keep the animals in good condition.
Before sunrise, the raid was already on its way, and the rapid pace
was maintained without stopping until evening. The men ate only
[262] a few dates at noon, did not take their siestas, and ate a meal
264 only in the evening -- all was sacrificed to the speed of the march,
which was the key to success.

Nearing their goal, the raiders forced their march even more
if that were possible, and they often divided into two parties; one
was entrusted with seizing the animals and bringing them to a
specified point, the other created a diversion in the enemy camps
to sidetrack them.

[411] The surprised enemy was attacked with gunshots by a few men
deployed as riflemen, while meharists swooped down on them,
hurled their javelins, and then soon came to hand-to-hand fighting.
The people who were attacked, for their part, tried to find out
the strength of the assailants, and depending on the case they re-
treated or themselves attacked.

In spite of this martial deployment and the vigor of the attack,
these combats were not very deadly, in general, and did not al-
ways cause deaths.

721 When raids were led against Sudanese camps, they were as in-
 727 terested in the Negroes and Negresses as they were in the camels.
 527 The kidnappers kept some of them to serve as servants and sold the
 others on the markets of In-Salah and the Touat.

726 Once the booty was stolen, the raiders went by forced march to
 the point agreed upon in advance, where they rejoined the other
 group of meharists.

The raided people, on the other hand, organized themselves,
 but they did not try to overtake the raiders immediately and did not
 wear themselves out in vain pursuit. As the return route of the raiders
 was known, they tried to reach a well where they had to pass; if
 they were successful in arriving before them and cutting them off
 from water, the real combat began, this time fierce and often quite
 deadly.



Fig. 55. Tuareg lance. The iron blade is decorated with
 copper inlays. The part where the hand is put is covered
 with leather, and a little leather loop placed behind is in-
 tended to hold the index finger which gives greater propulsion
 to the lance when it is thrown.

Hard pressed, the Tuareg formed in a square behind their camels
 and defended themselves under cover of their bucklers; /323/ when
 they saw it was impossible to take possession of the well, they
 abandoned their loot. The battle came to an end, and the raiders
 were rarely pursued. In the opposite camp, a certain number of men
 were left as sentries to guard against return offensives, and the others
 tried to gather up their animals and lead them back to the douar
 /encampment/.

727 When the raiding party was safe, the men divided up the booty
 in more or less equal parts, depending on each person's merits during
 the fight. But in some tribes, customs related to the tioussé demanded

727 that the Amrid paid part of it to the Imochar. The lender of arms or meharis was compensated in his turn, and that part of the booty was called abellag.

726 The Tuareg had the reputation of acting treacherously in battle and not always following the rules of chivalry for Saharian war.

In battle a man who threw himself at the feet of his conqueror and touched his clothes placed himself under his protection and 727 had a right to live; but the Tuareg did not always value this rule and often killed their prisoners.

When a tribe had been pillaged illegally, that is, when there had been no previous acts of hostility authorizing reprisal, a delegation of warriors from that tribe came to the opposing camp to try to negotiate for the return of the captures. This is what the Arabs call the myad, a term which has been adopted by the Tuareg. There again the Tuareg did not always show themselves to be very chivalrous, and they often savagely massacred the defenseless ambassadors.

726 During wars and raids, women enjoy the rare privilege of being respected by the combatants. During the operations of the 562 French occupation, men were often seen fleeing the camps, abandoning the women /324/ and children to the conquerors.

[648] This conduct has often caused the Tuareg to be accused of cowardice. This was a false interpretation of the facts, for the Tuareg acted that way prompted by the immunity which women enjoyed.

184 It is shameful during a raid to forget this rule of protection 726 and do violence to women, strip them of their clothes, or 562 penetrate into their tents. The infractions committed were often the acts of unscrupulous persons without honor. Most of the Imrad and Ikian, it appears, are in the habit of stripping women of their clothes and their jewels, going so far as to leave them completely nude, and it even happens that they rape them. The

(84) more chivalrous Imochar and a few rare Imrad try to oppose this,
 726 but in warlike escapades the Iklan and people with few morals are
 562 often more numerous than the others.

721 Abuses of women always called for vengeance, which the
 678 adversaries usually received before long. Acts of this kind were
 enough to raise up entire tribes against one another. And so, in the
 Sudan, the exactions of
 Marabout Abidine's people
 on the Kel Adrar Tuareg,
 at the time of the murder
 of their aménokal
 [411] Safikroum in 1912, made
 irreconcilable enemies
 of these two fractions.

[649] At the beginning of
 the French occupation,
 when lieutenants
 Cottenest and Guilho-
 Lohan carried out their
 reconnaissance missions
 in the Ahaggar, they
 found women abandoned
 in the camps by their
 husbands. The good care
 which was taken of them
 made it easier to make peaceful contact later with the Ihaggaren.

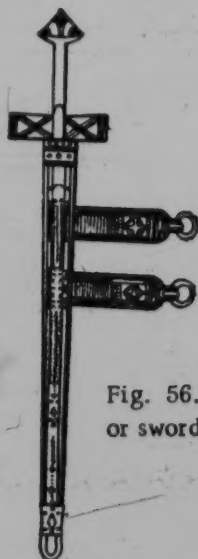


Fig. 56. The tacouba,
 or sword.

411 Tuareg weapons include iron lances, javelins with wooden
 staff, swords, daggers, and a buckler.

[177] /325/ Even before the French occupation the Tuareg knew
 how to use firearms and possessed a certain number of guns. They
 [437] were for the most part projectile weapons or archaic models of the

A married woman has possessions independent of those of her husband. Her camels bear her special mark, different from that of her husband. She does not take part in household work unless she wishes to do so.

She has the right not to follow her husband immediately after her marriage, but to camp near the tent of her parents for a year after her union, so that she can accustom herself gradually to the idea of separation.

To obtain a divorce, it is enough for her to refuse herself to her husband and to take refuge with her parents.

Almost all women, except the poor, have meharis mounts and their individual saddles.

At the ahal, as we have seen, she rules as mistress.

Noble or serf, she has one or more negresses responsible for the heavy work of the household and for the preparation of food.

It is she who is the more educated, for she knows better than her husband how to write and read the "tiffinagh's" (names of the characters of Tamashek writing), and it is she who teaches her children to read.

She plays the amz'ad, the instrument for which the Tuareg have such a lively predilection. "When two groups come to blows and one of them is defeated, the victors cry to the vanquished this wild cry peculiar to the Tuareg: /13/

'Hia! hia! hia!

'So there will be no amz'ad!'

"At the threat of the silence of the 'imz'aden' the vanquished return to the charge, so great is the fear of the women's unfavorable opinion." (Duveyrier).

Nothing gives the Tuareg as much pleasure as for one to be interested in the deeds and ways of the women of their tribes. Thus one has only to speak of Dassine or of Mellouka, women who enjoy a great reputation for beauty and intelligence in the Ahaggar, to see a stiff attitude give way to great good humor

Besides, there are few negroes who are not armed by their masters with a "tar'da" (spear with a wooden shaft) and with a "takouba" (saber), of which they are very proud. The best are sent on raids, and it seems that they acquit themselves very well in combat.

As to the negresses, there are some who confine themselves to attending to the care of the household and the tent, but there are quite a few others who are raised to the dignity of concubines. A noble Tuareg prefers to share his bed with a negress rather than to marry a "tamr'idit" (serf). He marries late, and when he decides to, he looks especially for a woman who, by her /34/ birth, will give his children future rights to command. The negress profits from this.

The negroes and negresses are not, as a rule, mistreated by the Tuareg. Besides, if the case should arise, they know how to use the following curious custom in use among the Tuareg.

When a slave, negro or negress, becomes too unhappy with his master and wishes to become the slave of another master, he splits the ear of a child or a horse or hamstring a mehari; in short, damages anything valuable that belongs to the master he wishes to have; then he stays beside his deed. Naturally, in reparation for the harm done, the negro is given in full possession to the injured master. There may be protest, if there was connivance between the slave and the master he wishes to have, and, in this case, the oath is deferred and the case brought before a marabout or a cadi. [692]

Thus the negro Tenoufek, who belonged to Semana, sister of Bika ag Moumou of the Kel Ahnet, slit the ear of a mare belonging to Sidi Keradi, the amenah of the Taltoq and the Kel Ahnet. In reparation the negress was given to Sidi, with whom she still remains.

Another example: the negro of El Biodh ould Settafi of the Settaf, hamstrung two camels belonging to Ibidi ag Bassi of the Ir'echoumen. In reparation El Biodh had to give Ibidi the negro and a camel besides. /35/